

Remarks

Claims 64 – 83 are pending. Claims 64 – 83 are presently rejected. Examination and reconsideration of the claims in view of the following remarks are respectfully requested.

Specification Objections

Page 3 of the Office action indicates that the “specification is objected to as failing to provide proper antecedent basis for the claimed subject matter.” Particularly, the Examiner indicates that the specification does not clearly define “the claim limitations of, ‘enroll’, ‘un-enroll’ and ‘cooperative gaming group’.” (Page 3, Action.)

In an effort to advance the prosecution of the instant application, claims 64 – 83 have been amended to include terms such as “join,” “withdraw,” and “cooperative gaming environment,” even though Applicant has provided reasons of supports for previously presented claim limitations on Pages 9 and 10 in the Response submitted on October 29, 2008.

Applicant respectfully submits that the Specification supports the amended claims 64 and 74.

For example, the Specification discloses that “players can be invited to join the cooperative gaming environment is to register their interest with a software implemented registration module of the central control unit 16 so that, when a cooperative gaming environment presents itself, the players are invited to participate.” See paragraph [0065]. For another example, the Specification also discloses that “[a]t each stage the system displays the choice and the players have the option to continue or to withdraw.” See paragraph [0096]. For another example, the Specification also discloses that “in the playing of gaming machines 12 in a cooperative gaming environment, the players would be playing for a prize as designated generally at 18.” See paragraph [0063].

Applicant respectfully requests withdrawals of the objections.

35 U.S.C. §101 Rejections

Claims 64 – 73 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 as being directed to a non-statutory subject matter “because these are method or process claims that do not transform underlying subject matter (such as an article or materials) to a different state or thing, nor are they tied to another statutory class (such as a particular machine).” (Page 2, Action.)

Independent claims 64 and 74, and their respective dependent claims 65, 68, 69, 71, 72, 75, 77, 79, 80, 82, and 83 have been amended. For example, claim 64 includes “presenting an invitation on said gaming system,” “receiving an acceptance ... on said gaming system,” and “presenting an option on said gaming system.” Claim 74 includes “a gaming controller” that can “interact with at least one input interface of a gaming machine,” “receive an acceptance ... on said gaming system,” and “interact with at least one visual display device.”

In other words, when accepted through an invitation, a game system moves into a cooperative gaming environment.

Furthermore, claims 63 and 74 now recite a particular machine, for example, a gaming system, and describe how a cooperative game is established.

Therefore, as amended, claims 63 and 74, and their respective dependent claims meet the requirements of 35 U.S.C. §101.

Withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested.

35 U.S.C. §112 Rejections

Claims 64 – 73 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement.

As discussed above, claims 63 and 74, and their respective dependent claims 65, 68, 69, 71, 72, 75, 77, 79, 80, 82, and 83 have been amended to include terms such as “join,” “withdraw,” and “cooperative gaming environment.” Applicant respectfully submits that the

Specification supports claims 64 and 74. For example, the Specification discloses that “players can be invited to join the cooperative gaming environment is to register their interest with a software implemented registration module of the central control unit 16 so that, when a cooperative gaming environment presents itself, the players are invited to participate.” See paragraph [0065]. For another example, the Specification also discloses that “[a]t each stage the system displays the choice and the players have the option to continue or to withdraw.” See paragraph [0096]. For another example, the Specification also discloses that “in the playing of gaming machines 12 in a cooperative gaming environment, the players would be playing for a prize as designated generally at 18.” See paragraph [0063].

Claims 73 and 78 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement, and the enablement requirement.

Claims 73 and 78 have been cancelled. The rejections are thus deemed moot.

Claim 70 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as “being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.” (Page 5, Action.)

Claim 70 has been cancelled. The rejection is thus deemed moot.

Applicant respectfully requests withdrawals of the objections.

35 U.S.C. §102 Rejections

Claims 64 – 72, 74 – 77, and 79 – 83 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 (e) as being anticipated by U.S. Publication No. 2003/0064807 (“Walker”).

Independent claims 64 and 74 have been amended, and dependent claims 65, 68, 69, 71, 72, 75, 77, 79, 80, 82, and 83 have also been amended. Dependent claims 70, 73, 78, and 81 have been cancelled.

Amended claim 64 is directed to “[a] method for use with a gaming system,” that includes “presenting an invitation on said gaming system allowing a person to join a cooperative gaming environment,” “receiving an acceptance to join said cooperative gaming environment through said invitation on said gaming system,” “establishing at least one rule for a cooperative game that can be played by the cooperative gaming environment ~~group~~ after receipt of said acceptance,” “presenting the at least one rule to the person on said gaming system allowing the person to accept said at least one rule prior to commencing the cooperative game,” and “presenting an option on said gaming system allowing the person to withdraw from the cooperative gaming environment subsequent to presenting the at least one rule to the person and prior to commencing the cooperative game.”

Amended claim 74 is directed to “[a] gaming system” that includes “a game controller” that can “interact with at least one input interface of a gaming machine in order to present an invitation to allow a person to accept to join a cooperative gaming environment,” “receive an acceptance to join said cooperative gaming environment on said gaming system,” “establish at least one rule for a cooperative game that can be played by the cooperative gaming environment after the receipt of said acceptance,” “interact with at least one visual display device of the gaming machine in order to present the at least one rule for the cooperative game to allow the person to accept said at least one rule prior to commencing the cooperative game,” and “interact with the at least one input interface of the gaming machine in order to present an option to allow the person to withdraw from the cooperative gaming group subsequent to presenting the at least one rule to the person and prior to commencing the cooperative game.”

Applicant respectfully submits that Walker does not anticipate claims 64 and 74.

Walker does not disclose a system that allows a player to withdraw from a linked play after a group objective and format has been established, but prior to the linked play.

Rather, as shown in FIG. 12 of Walker, Walker discloses that the linked play is initiated right after the group objective and format has been established. The player can then terminate the linked play after the linked play has been initiated. Specifically, Walker discloses that “arrangements or measures may be provided to accommodate a group with a member who wishes to quit the group during linked play. For instance, a group member may not wish to make

any further wagers or the group member may be required to be somewhere else.” See paragraph [0253]. That is, the player is only provided an exit option only after the linked play has started and after the group objective and format has been established.

Therefore, Walker does not anticipate at least “presenting an option on said gaming system allowing the person to withdraw from the cooperative gaming environment subsequent to presenting the at least one rule to the person and prior to commencing the cooperative game,” as recited in claim 64, and “interact with the at least one input interface of the gaming machine in order to present an option to allow the person to withdraw from the cooperative gaming group subsequent to presenting the at least one rule to the person and prior to commencing the cooperative game,” as recited in claim 74.

Claims 64 and 74 are therefore allowable for at least the reasons set forth above.

Claims 65 – 69, 71, and 72 depend from claim 64. Therefore, claims 65 – 69, 71, and 72 are also allowable for at least the reasons set forth above. Similarly, claims 75 – 77, 79, 80, 82, and 83 depend from claim 74, and are therefore also allowable for at least the reasons set forth above.

35 U.S.C. §103 Rejections

Claims 73 and 78 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) as being unpatentable over Walker in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,186,893.

Claims 73 and 78 have been cancelled.

Rejections are thus deemed moot.

Applicant respectfully request withdrawal of the rejections.

No new matter has been added.

Conclusion

Applicant respectfully submits that all of claims 64 – 69, 71, 72, 74 – 77, 79, 80, 82, and 83 are allowable. In the event that the Examiner believes a telephone interview with the undersigned Applicant's Representative would be helpful in advancing prosecution of this patent application, the undersigned is available for telephone consultation during normal business hours.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: August 19, 2009

/Larry M. Jarvis/
Larry M. Jarvis
Reg. No. 27,341

McAndrews, Held & Malloy, Ltd.
500 W. Madison Street
34th Floor
Chicago, Il 60661
Phone (312) 775-8000
Fax (312) 775-8100